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JOINT COMMITTEE ON DOCTRINE OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH UNION AND
THE CLERICAL UNION

EDITORIAL

THE LAMBETH REPORT

For a fair assessment of a document like the Report of the Lambeth Conference it is important not only to be acquainted with its contents but also to have some understanding of its authority and of the general ends, if any, to which its publication is directed. In earlier days the bishops themselves were almost over-anxious to make it known that the Lambeth Conference was an informal gathering with no ecclesiastical authority, and the point was made again even during the unprecedented campaign of publicity which heralded this year's conference. It certainly is the case that nothing in the Conference report is canonically binding within any province of the Anglican Communion. At the same time, the Conference is vested with all the appearances of authority. It has for long been the custom of the bishops to issue an Encyclical Letter, in which the opening address sounds for all the world like a pronouncement from a General Council of the Church: "We, Archbishops and Bishops of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in communion with the See of Canterbury, three hundred and ten in number . . ." The publicity campaign which, naturally enough brought pride to the hearts of those who conducted it so successfully, could not but lead people at large into thinking that the pronouncements of such an important gathering must necessarily indicate "what the Church believes". In other words, the "ordinary men and women—Churchmen, Christians in the wider sense and citizens generally", to whom, in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Report speaks, can hardly be blamed if they think of the Lambeth Conference as making authoritative pronouncements on behalf of the Anglican Communion. This view is certainly held by many intelligent people outside our communion. As FAITH AND UNITY is concerned largely with the theological discussion of ecumenical questions it would be out of place to enter upon a general discussion of the Lambeth Conference as such, but such a discussion ought to take place, particularly in view of the proposals to invite to the Conference bishops from those bodies with which Anglican Provinces have relationships of Communion. Dr. Mascall considers this question of authority in his paper on LAMBETH 1958 AND CHRISTIAN UNITY, which was delivered to the Annual Conference of the Committee for the Defence of Church Principles. The full text is published by the Faith Press. We strongly recommend this survey of the ecumenical sections of the Report.

"A STATEMENT ON CHRISTIAN UNITY"

In Resolution 13, the Conference "welcomes and endorses" the statement on unity produced by the committee appointed to discuss *Church Unity and the Church Universal*. There is in the statement much that is good and true, though not particularly new or stimulating in any positive sense. Most encouraging, perhaps, is the concluding paragraph, with its appeal for prayer for unity—the committee report links this specifically with the name of the Abbé Couturier. It is greatly to be hoped that the bishops themselves in their dioceses will now take the lead in promoting this prayer, and give it first place in the field of ecumenical activity.

The thought of the committee on the subject of unity seems to have been governed by the urgency of the need for unity as an answer to the world and the enemies of God at large. No thoughtful Christian could doubt this. Equally, no one who truly believes in our Lord and his Church could do other than welcome both the increasing desire for unity among Christians and the steps which have already promoted a growth in unity. The statement, however, leaves the impression that generally all is well in the ecumenical movement; that, while there are great difficulties in the way, the movement is on the whole proceeding on the right lines. There is no suggestion that the approach to unity revealed in the various reunion schemes is in serious respects open to criticism, or that the World Council of Churches, for all the good it has done, is not a body to which Anglicans can always give unquestioned support. The desire to stress the good that has been done should command universal sympathy, but a document which seeks to offer guidance to Christian people, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said in a broadcast talk, should not leave the impression that the way of the World Council is one without pitfalls. It may be that this optimism is to be seen in the light of the current reluctance to make any *qualitative* assessment of the differences between the Church of England and the nonconformist bodies. We should rightly be deterred from adopting a "better than you" attitude in our approach to Christians of other traditions, but there must, sooner or later, be some theological appraisal of our differences. Failure to do this leads to the evasiveness which is characteristic of so many official statements in the ecumenical field.

An instance of this is to be found in the reference to episcopacy in this general statement. "Loyalty to the age-long tradition of the Church, and to our own experience, compels us to believe that a ministry to be acknowledged by every part of the Church can only be attained through the historic episcopate . . ." Are loyalty and experience the only factors to be considered? No, indeed, for the statement goes on to a belief that the episcopal ministry has

been given to the Church by Divine Providence; but the order of these grounds for adhering to episcopacy is strange. There is the usual zeal to recognize other ministries, though mercifully the phrase "real ministries of the Word and Sacraments" does not come into its own again until a later section of the report. But what meaning are we to give to the recognition of "other forms of ministry than episcopacy in which have been revealed the gracious activity of God in the life of the universal Church"? Is this merely an acknowledgment of what none would deny, that the ministries of the separated bodies have been fruitful in bringing souls to God, in the circumstances of separation? Or is it a hint of what is more or less assumed in some reunion schemes, that all ministries are ministries of the Church, and that episcopacy is a form of ministry, the value of which is its historical link with the past? As the report is given to us, to quote the Archbishop again, for encouragement, it would help us if, just occasionally, we could be told that the Church of England does possess something positive in the realm of truth, and is not simply a body possessed of a few "insights". A report of such dimensions and compiled so quickly can hardly be required to conform to perfect standards of draftsmanship. Even so, careful reading before adoption might have led to a revision of the last paragraph but one of this general statement, which seems to suggest at first sight that the world can see the People of God giving united witness only when they join national or local Councils of Churches.

FULL COMMUNION AND INTERCOMMUNION

Ecumenical discussion will benefit from the simplification proposed by the Conference, whereby the term "full communion" is to be used for unrestricted *communicatio in sacris* between two Churches not of the same denominational or confessional family, whereas "intercommunion" is to be used where varying degrees of relation other than "full communion" are established. The confusions of "full intercommunion" and "limited intercommunion" were certainly no help during the discussion on South India in 1955 and after.

WIDER EPISCOPAL FELLOWSHIP

The Conference recommends the holding of a conference for bishops representing not only the Anglican Communion but also those episcopal bodies with which we have relations of full communion or intercommunion. By this means such people as the Old Catholics will be drawn in; and that is all to the good; but it is important that the terms of reference and aims of such a conference should be made clear at the outset. A proposal to invite bishops from the new "united churches" to the Lambeth Conference is commended to the President and Consultative Body

for consideration before the next Lambeth Conference. If it is adopted, there is all the more reason why the position of the Lambeth Conference and the significance of its statements should be thoroughly examined without delay.

THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

The Conference as a whole endorses the committee report on South India. Much of this report is devoted to a survey of the various actions taken by provinces of the Anglican Communion to govern their relations with the C.S.I. The committee have examined the new C.S.I. Ordinal, and agree that it is adequate to secure a regular and valid ministry. It is odd that the question of "regularity" has been introduced in this place. Hitherto, South Indian orders have been considered only in terms of "validity", and many who objected to the establishment of intercommunion between the Church of England and the C.S.I. did so partly because they maintained that these orders, if valid, were none the less irregular, having been bestowed by bishops who had departed from the full fellowship of the Church and sanctioned the ministry of "presbyters" who had not been episcopally ordained side by side with that of true priests of the Church. The adoption of a new ordinal, what ever its qualities, does not regularise this position, which even our own Convocation report recognised as an anomaly. There follows some comment on the progress made by the C.S.I. Much of this is fully justified, but it seems to be something short of complete honesty to ignore the fact that even South Indian bishops complain bitterly of the slow progress made towards effective unity, and to pass over the theological difficulties which the Derby Committee saw to be barriers to full communion. It is painful to admit it, but one is again impressed by this apparent conspiracy of silence in regard to the less favourable aspects of the South Indian scheme. One would have thought that the English bishops at least would have recognised that one of our crying needs is the restoration of *confidence*; and this will certainly not be achieved so long as there is any feeling that important difficulties are ignored.

NANDYAL

Good sense seems to have prevailed so far as the treatment of the "continuing Anglicans" of Nandyal are concerned, it being recognised that people cannot be bludgeoned into unity. It is recommended that the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon should make arrangements for the spiritual oversight of Anglicans in the Nandyal area. On the other hand, it is difficult to see what will happen if the North Indian Plan for Reunion goes through.

CHURCH UNION IN NORTH INDIA/PAKISTAN AND CEYLON

The proposals for reunion in Ceylon and North India/Pakistan were submitted for the consideration of the Conference with a request for guidance as to whether their adoption could be made on the assumption that the "united churches" could be in full communion with provinces of the Anglican Communion. Among the factors governing future relations is the insistence that the "united churches" should maintain relations of full communion with all the parent bodies of those taking part in the union. The Conference recommends that permission given to visiting ministers from such bodies, to celebrate Holy Communion in the united churches should not be a bar to full communion with the Anglican provinces. In support of this recommendation the committee report maintains that such permission will be occasional only, and will be limited by "conscience clauses" provided in the reunion although it is recognised that this permission is recognised as a serious departure from Anglican practice. In the committee's discussion of the subject there is a curious *non sequitur*. Having asked whether the anomaly in question need result either in the withdrawal of Anglicans from the negotiations or in the denial of full communion if they enter the united church, the committee go on to argue not that the granting of full communion is right in such circumstances but that permission to celebrate granted to non-episcopally ordained ministers does not call in question the intention of the united church to continue the threefold ministry of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon. This, if not entirely another question, is only one element for consideration in regard to relations of communion. Unfortunately, the Report as a whole seems to assume that the question of orders is, in fact, the only one that causes real difficulty. A far reaching proposal such as this ought to have been accompanied by some discussion at least of the nature of "communion" in Church relationships, and this in turn should have been related to questions of faith. The somewhat jejune statement of doctrine contained in the North Indian Plan may be orthodox. It does not follow that it is *sufficient*. As to the creeds, as Dr. Mascall points out, it is possible that a communicant in the united churches of North India/Pakistan might never have heard either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. A Baptist, at a conference held earlier this year, agreed that this might well be the case with former Baptists who participate in this Plan.

It is likely that the Theological Committee of the Church Union will be conferring at length on basic theological issues raised by the Report, and will no doubt make its findings known.

SCHISM AND COMMUNION

References to Schism in modern discussions of Christian unity often apply to it expressions such as "sinful," and we are given to understand that there is something new in this way of thinking. No doubt if we judge only from the point of view of "reformed" Western Christianity this may well seem to be true. For once the conception of the Church as a divine institution tracing its origin not to the will of man but to the will of God is discarded in favour of the belief that any group of like-minded believers may constitute a "church", it is evident that schism ceases to have any serious meaning and may recur just so often as the situation at the moment appears to demand. It is however open to question whether we have advanced beyond the stage of recognition that schism is "sinful" not merely because it gives rise to wastage of resources and manpower, overlapping and competition in the field of missionary activity considerations which are after all of a practical rather than theological nature. One hears that unity is to be sought at all costs for pastoral reasons, with the implicit suggestion that theological principles may rightly be ignored in the face of the common enemies of paganism and indifference.

Now it is beginning to be recognised that since the Church is a theological concept and that it has an objective existence, the sinfulness of Schism must lie not in the harmful effects of the latter on human aspirations and endeavour however laudable but in the outrage which is committed against the will of God itself. St. Paul in writing on the subject of schism, as for example in 1 Cor. i, nowhere suggests that it is to be deprecated because so long as it persists it will make the task of evangelisation more difficult and hinder the progress of the Gospel in a pagan world. His condemnation of party strife in Corinth arises solely from his concern for the spiritual and corporate integrity of the Church.

It is necessary to recall that schism involving misbelief or heresy is treated by many authorities in the pre-Nicene Church, e.g., by Cyprian of Carthage, as not less grave than the sin of apostasy and consequently as involving *ipso facto* excommunication. Reconciliation therefore necessarily included penitence with its concomitant discipline of giving positive testimony of a change of mind. Only after testimony of this kind has been provided whether by individuals or by groups was it possible to obtain readmission to the Church's fellowship. It is not without significance, as we have learnt at length from Dr. Thornton in his *Common Life in the Body of Christ*, that in the New Testament "fellowship" and "communion" are represented by the single expression *Koinonia*. The question whether in the case of a group, more or less extensive, all ministrations were devoid of spiritual efficacy was at first, it seems, unanimously answered in the negative. Later, however, more especially under the influence of

Augustine's irenic attitude towards the Donatist schism in North Africa, the belief came to prevail at least in the West that subsequent reconciliation was capable of giving a kind of retrospective validation to its acts, such as ordination, performed during the period when the Schism had prevailed. But nowhere was it suggested that a schism could be healed merely by a mutual agreement to recognise communicants on either side. Every instance of reconciliation presupposes agreement in regard to questions of doctrine or discipline, in regard to which differences had arisen. In the course of the fifth and sixth centuries the sees of Rome and Constantinople more than once broke off communion. This meant that technically a state of schism existed. In one case it concerned the credit of John Chrysostom, in whose case it was held at Rome (not without justice) that a serious wrong had been done, in another the attitude towards the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. In the former a matter of discipline in the latter one of doctrine was at stake. But in neither case was there merely a question of agreeing mutually to resume communion. In both there were previous negotiations and agreement on the points concerned by both parties. It is undeniable that during the period to which we have referred the New Testament conception of the Church as a theological entity had not ceased to prevail.

It seems therefore that unless we are to avoid a prolonged period of uncertainty, with consequent danger to spiritual interests such as still seems to exist in South India, as indeed had been foretold, more serious thinking on the nature of the Church in the light of the New Testament, as understood today by theologians of all traditions, and consequently upon the implications of schism, is an urgent demand.

.. TREVOR JALLAND.

ANGLO-RUSSIAN THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

We very much regret that the review article on this subject, published in the summer number, contained no reference to the publisher of the book or its price. It is of course published by Faith Press at 15/-.

BEYOND THE GREAT DIVIDE

The search for the *via media* is a characteristically Anglican pursuit, though the result is often reckoned by outsiders as simply a residual, compromise Christianity, a hotch-potch of the bits left over when we have taken out the bits that people don't hold with. It would be idle to deny that 'no extremes' has often meant in practice harmless generalities, with their implications carefully not worked out: but the *via media* is not simply an Anglican opiate born of expediency. There is a Catholicism which is neither that of Trent nor of Geneva; it is not, as Dr. Mascall remarks* the Anglo-Saxon 'Northern Catholicism' of which Dr. N. P. Williams dreamed; nor is it to be disinterred by the diligent historian from some Golden Age when all was perfect. Neither compromise religion, racial religion nor archæological religion provide a genuine faith that men can live by.

Luther undoubtedly had the method—the interpretation both of Scripture and the ecclesiastical tradition in the light of a re-discovered insight. We may note (with Professor Wheeler Robinson) that the 'vital discovery of the divine nature as gracious' dates from the 12th century, not the 16th; but we can agree with Protestants (and with Fr. Bouyer) that the Lutheran re-statement of justification by faith brought a new proportion through which all things might be re-assessed, provided a key to the New Testament and restored a personal religion. What we may reasonably doubt is that Luther restored all the insights that have been lost; provided all the keys, and got us back to the Pauline outlook in its wholeness. We may well ask why the 16th century reformation sat so uneasily with the 12th century one, why 'personal' should have been so widely identified with 'individual' and 'psychological', why the divine sovereignty must go hand-in-hand with the utter worthlessness of man, even when restored by God. Above all, there is that strange and bewildering proposition which seems to us to underly Protestant theology—that if a gift from God were ever really put into our hands and possessed by us then it would cease to be a gift. We continue, therefore, to look for more insights which will provide further keys, and to examine the tradition for those implicit viewpoints which we have lacked since the middle ages, but which were not always lacking at all times and in all places.

For Dr. Mascall, therefore, theological unity is not a question of adding Protestantism to post-Tridentine Catholicism, nor of constructing a basic Christianity from the points on which they agree. Indeed, he argues that the 16th century divisions in fact stemmed from the very things on which Protestants and Catholics did agree—the uncriticized assumptions and inadequate insights which they inherited in common from their immediate predeces-

* E. L. Mascall, *The Recovery of Unity*. Longmans, 25s.

sors. Against the most obvious of these, the neat equation of 'sacrifice' with the death of a victim, Dr. Hicks delivered a volume nearly thirty years ago. On the basis of such an assumption, there can be no satisfactory doctrine either of the Atonement or of the eucharistic sacrifice. That was only a beginning. In the last quarter of a century there has been a spate of quite revolutionary theological writing, involving the re-adjustment of a great many positions. Dr. Mascall sets himself to assess some of this: Dix, Jungmann, Bouyer, Congar; Kirk, Ramsey and Prestige; Nygren, Lampe and Baillie. It is reasonable that much of his material should come from the recent pioneering into comparatively untouched fields: both liturgy and devotional practice give an implicit rather than an explicit theology, and it is the implicit, the unexpressed insight, which we need and which we can so easily overlook. It is *eucharistia* which explains how something can be both a gift of God and a real possession of ours: thanksgiving acknowledges that we have nothing that we have not received, and that therefore we have a duty of obedient and responsible use according to the will of God. The General Thanksgiving in the Prayer Book expresses this admirably; but neither the Reformers nor their adversaries realised that this had any bearing on the service known since the earliest times as the "Eucharist". Consecration by eucharist was an insight which had been lost. Insight into the unity of the Church had similarly been lost. Once it was no longer seen as "a new order of being, transcending the order of time and space", its sacramental nature was forgotten. The doctrine of the ministry became one of "succession not incorporation"; the sacraments bring Christ down from heaven, rather than lifting up created nature; the sacramental signs become enclosing prisons rather than spiritual instruments. The search for new insights thus takes Dr. Mascall not only behind the 16th century, but behind the Constantinian Peace as well. He cannot share Professor Hodges' simple conviction that the Eastern Orthodox have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They indeed have retained insights which the West has lost, but they have undoubtedly blurred other insights which the West has retained more clearly. Theological unity depends upon mutual understanding, and that is destroyed by mere hostilities: the weakness of Protestantism is its anti-Romanism, and God forbid that we should learn from the Orthodox in a spirit of anti-Latinism, or from anybody in a spirit of anti-somebody else. But Christendom has been so long rent by bitter antagonisms that it is a spirit difficult to exercise.

Thus we may wonder whether Dr. Mascall is quite fair to the Reformers. Calvin and Cranmer made valiant efforts to restore a pastoral conception of the ministry, to revive the corporate nature of the Church, to close the great gulf between clergy and laity. They saw that if Christ's body is in heaven and we are to feed on

him, we must lift up our hearts and in faith thither ascend. True, it never occurred to them that the oblation of the Church might also thither ascend, and be accepted on the heavenly altar where stands the Lamb as it had been slain. Partly, no doubt, this was because of "angelism", the late mediaeval devotional tendency to reserve the supernatural dimension for souls, not for material things like bodies and bread; but mainly because for them the bread and wine were not the oblation of the Church, the one bread which is the sign that we, apparently many, are one Body. St. Thomas had indeed said that the *res* of this sacrament was the unity of the Church, but mediaeval liturgical custom had done its best to disguise the fact.

Dr. Mascall, while dealing effectively with mediaeval liturgical inadequacies, lays the main blame on Nominalism, a philosophy which holds that there is no more in things than meets the eye and that therefore there can be no real relations between them. But are the shoulders of Nominalism broad enough to support all that is loaded upon them? The Reformers seem to have used Nominalism only when they wanted to—to destroy the mediaeval sacramental system. Zwingli was nominalist on the eucharistic consecration but not, surely, on the nature of faith. It is unfair to argue that they were simply Nominalists who hadn't thought far and consistently enough, for they were more concerned with asserting the reality of faith than with denying the reality of the eucharistic presence. Nominalism was a useful tool, but behind it must lie a more radical dissociation of ideas.

It is this dissociation which is the trouble—the dissociation of our praise and thanksgiving from the bread and wine, despite Justin Martyr's insistence that this food is called by us *eucharistia*; of propitiatory sacrifice from eucharistic sacrifice; of our eucharist from Christ's; of our worship from Christ's glorifying of his Father. There is here the unbinding of a fundamental unity, which must (and did) have its consequent effect upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. This fundamental unity was surely kept in being, not by philosophy, but by liturgical and devotional and moral practice, by the Christian "way"; and it was loosed, not by philosophical but by liturgical, devotional and moral inadequacies. Behind all these lie the slow and unperceived changes and perversions of Church Order in its broadest sense—the ordering of Christian life.

The restoration of theological unity must come, therefore, not by compromise or amputation but by re-ordering, the regaining of that true perspective in which all things fall into their due and canonical place. This does not depend on the disinterring of a "model age", neither is there any reason why we should succeed to perfection where others have failed. We must strive, because this is the perpetual effort of faith; but strive without either presumption or despair. The Church is never so disordered that

it falls, nor so well-ordered that it can stand without this continual reformation according to the Word of God. When theological disintegration is at its most abysmal, by the mercy of God the Christian can still find in the mumbled rites or the one-sided preaching a straight course to God.

DOUGLAS POPPLEWELL.

THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD

(Extracts from *The Royal Priesthood*, by Henry Balmforth)

The foundation of Christian priesthood is laid in the one originative priesthood of Jesus Christ. Its application to the needs of the Church in each generation of Christians is made through the apostolic ministry which Christ has given to his Church; a ministry which is the extension or expansion of the apostolate established by him in the days of his flesh . . . This extension is by the gracious acts of the Lord himself, the ordainer of all ministers, in a sacramental mode whereby those who themselves hold his commission pass it on to others. By common consent, from the second century to the sixteenth, the bishops of the Church were accounted the holders of the apostolic office, in so far as that office was an abiding structural element in the Church; and they ordained presbyters and deacons for a delegated ministry, each order at its own level, reserving for the Episcopate the continuation of apostolic ministry by the laying on of the bishop's hands with public prayer.

The original functions of these three orders of ministers have some marked differences from those which they fulfil in modern times. The primitive bishop was normally the regular pastor and liturgical minister of the local Christian congregation.

It was he who presided at the Sunday Eucharist, preached the liturgical sermon, taught and baptized the catechumens, and in fact did most of what the modern parish priest regards as his ordinary work. The presbyter was still a member of a group or college, and each bishop had his "senate" of presbyters. They assisted him in his pastoral and liturgical functions. It was they rather than the bishop himself who carried on—though, naturally, on a much smaller scale in later ages—that organizing and administrative business which today we regard as the heaviest burden of the episcopate. The deacons were the immediate attendants on the bishop; the office of archdeacon still survives as a witness to that relationship, though archdeacons have for centuries been in priest's orders. Deacons were not "assistant curates", each under the direction of a single presbyter-incumbent,

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ORDINATION: THE TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF THE BAPTISTS

Baptists are not the only Christian communion in which varying views of the nature of the ministry and the implications of ordination are to be found. They are like others too in that a good deal of reconsideration has recently been going on, a searching of heart as to some modern tendencies and practices, an examination of historical precedents, and a renewed study of basic theology. This has been due partly to the influence of the ecumenical movement which has made most of us look again at our assumptions in "faith and order," and partly to internal tensions. The recent report of an officially appointed committee set up to consider *The Meaning and Practice of Ordination among Baptists* (hereinafter referred to as "Report") has aroused much interest and discussion amongst us.

Baptists are a world-wide denomination with some twenty million communicant members. In what follows I discuss the position of British Baptists only: it would take too much space to go further afield and in any case the variations of practice are not fundamental. I have also tried to be as objective as I can, to quote representative pronouncements, and not to obtrude my personal views more than I must.

I start by quoting at some length from an authoritative statement by the Baptist Union Council in 1948 on *The Baptist Doctrine of the Church*, not to be confused, of course, with the committee report just mentioned. "The Baptist conception of the ministry is governed by the principle that it is a ministry of a church and not only a ministry of an individual. It is the church which preaches the Word and celebrates the sacraments, and it is the church which, through pastoral oversight, feeds the flock and ministers to the world. It normally does these things through the person of its minister, but not solely through him. Any member of the church may be authorised by it, on occasion, to exercise the functions of the ministry, in accordance with the principle of the priesthood of all believers, to preach the Word, to administer baptism, to preside at the Lord's Table, to visit and comfort or rebuke members of the fellowship.

"Baptists, however, have had from the beginning an exalted conception of the office of the Christian minister and have taken care to call men to serve as pastors. The minister's authority to exercise his office comes from the call of God in his personal experience, but this call is tested and approved by the church of which he is a member and (as is increasingly the rule) by the representatives of a large group of churches. He receives intellectual and spiritual training and is then invited to exercise his gifts in a particular sphere. His authority, therefore, is from Christ through the believing community. It is not derived from a chain

of bishops, held to be lineally descended from the Apostles, and we gratefully affirm that to our non-episcopal communities as to those episcopally governed, the gifts of the Spirit and the power of God are freely given.

"Many amongst us hold that since the ministry is the gift of God to the Church and the call to exercise the functions of a minister comes from Him, a man who is called is not only the minister of a local Baptist church but also a minister of the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

"Ordination takes place when a man has satisfactorily completed his college training and has been called to the pastorate of a local church, appointed to chaplaincy service, or accepted for service abroad by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"The ordination service is presided over by either the Principal of his college, a General Superintendent" (i.e., a minister set apart to exercise functions of pastoral oversight and guidance among the ministers and churches of a large area; there are ten in England and Wales H.M.) "or a senior minister, and is shared in by other ministers and lay representatives of the church. Though there is no prescribed or set form of service, it invariably includes either a personal statement of faith or answers to a series of questions regarding the faith. From the 17th century onwards ordination took place with the laying on of hands: in the nineteenth century this custom fell into disuse, but is now again increasingly practised."

On this representative official statement, which covers most of the ground of this article, I offer certain comments.

In the first place, the sentence saying that "many amongst us" hold that ordination is to the Christian ministry in general and not only to that of a local church, is a curious understatement. I should maintain that this has always been the typical Baptist belief. For example, when the Baptist church at Olney ordained William Carey on August 10th, 1786, they recorded in their Church Book that he was set apart "to preach the Gospel wherever God in His Providence may call him". This was not due to any premonition of his later, and then undreamed of, missionary service in India, but was their customary practice. It would be easy to multiply evidence from past and present.

Secondly, Baptists have been in the main "independent" or "congregational" in church government. I say "in the main" because one section of the denomination was for many years presbyterian, and because mutual dependency, fellowship and common action have always been as much a part of Baptist life as the independent rights of the local congregation. No particular form of polity is regarded as sacrosanct, and notable developments in the direction of a more connexional order have taken place in the last fifty years. Yet the local congregation has a

larger measure of self-government and of responsibility for its own affairs than is customary in many other Churches.

It should be added that "independency" will be misunderstood unless it is realised that in our belief the local congregation is the representative and embodiment at that time and in that place of the one holy, catholic, apostolic Church. Baptists believe in the continuity of the Church and in the necessity of "apostolic succession". Indeed, one reason for the coming into being of the Free Churches as separate communions in the 16th and 17th centuries in England was their fear lest the continuity of the Church was being broken by aberrations from apostolic faith and practice. We certainly do not think of ourselves as originating in the 16th century, except in that purely organisational sense. We were an integral part of the Christian Church in England before we separated from the establishment, or were driven out. (Both terms are accurate.) The Church of England rightly holds that it purged itself of abuses in the 16th century while maintaining unbroken continuity with the old Church in England and with the apostolic Church. So do we, though our fathers held that reform should have gone further than it did in the Anglican Church.

In our belief the essential continuity of the Church consists in its total fellowship, including its ministry, rather than in any one element in its ministry. The true "apostolic succession," we maintain, is in loyalty to the apostolic faith, in Word and sacraments and in mission; a continuity of faith and witness. That the present day ministry of the Church is continuous with that of the apostolic Church we have no doubt at all, but to regard the episcopate as the *exclusive* channel for the transmission of divine grace does not seem to us to correspond either with New Testament teaching or with the facts of history. The New Testament suggests that the Church then possessed both adaptability and continuity. The life of the New Israel had continuity with the old Israel, but the outward forms of Judaism were not carried over into Christianity, and varied forms of church organisation and ministry were to be found in the early Church. "The Spirit is free. The continuity is in life not in form. The New Testament does not suggest that the Lord imposed a rigid pattern of ministry upon his Church. It does suggest that its ministry will remain the same in function and purpose, while the form will be adaptable to changing environment." (Report, pp. 14f.)

3. The reference to the laying on of hands reflects the fact that Baptists "reacted" vigorously against what seemed to them the excesses of the Oxford Movement and in so doing moved away from much in their own past doctrine and practice, helped by the unbalanced individualism in the general nineteenth century outlook. The more recent return to the New Testament symbol of the laying on of hands is symptomatic of the reconsideration to which I have referred. But we do not regard the succession or

authority of the ministry as in any way dependent upon its observance.

4. As stated, we do not restrict the administration of the sacraments to ordained ministers. At some times and in some places in our history such restriction has been a rule of order, sometimes strictly observed, but our governing principle is that the local church may invite anyone to preside at the Lord's Supper on its behalf. It is the church, not the individual who decides: no man may take such an office upon himself. We take seriously the priesthood of all believers. The laity, through the diaconate and the church meeting, take a large and controlling share in the leadership and spiritual care of the local congregation, and take as prominent a part nationally as do the ministers. Women are eligible equally with men to hold any position, and many are to be found on the local diaconates. The ministry has always been open to women on the same terms as to men and there are today three women on our national Accredited List of ordained ministers. (While the right of the local church to choose whom it will as minister is admitted, there is an official list of those who are recognised by the denomination as a whole, and entrance to it is carefully guarded.)

5. But though Baptists thus give a very large place to the laity in church life and government, we have a high conception of the ministerial office. The report of the committee defines ordination as "an act of the Church, wherein the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, publicly recognises and confirms that a Christian believer has been gifted, called, and set apart by God for the work of the ministry and in the name of Christ commissions him for his work." (Report, p.20.)

The call of God is fundamental: the ministry is God's gift in Christ to the Church (Ephes. 4, 11f.). "No man can take upon himself any such task except at the imperative and irresistible call of God. This fact is basic to our understanding of the ministry and to our interpretation of ordination." (Report, p.20.)

But "the work of the ministry is not personal service rendered by the individual in his own right, nor is a minister a free-lance prophet exercising his ministry in a private capacity . . . He speaks in the name of God; but in so doing he speaks within the witness of the Church and in its name; and so his work of ministry must be an act of Christ and of the Church. Ordination signifies the setting apart of the minister for this work both by Christ and by the Church." (Report, p.20f.) The ministerial function includes leadership of the Church's worship, the administration of the sacraments, the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Faith, the work of pastoral care and Christian service.

Referring to the New Testament interpretation of the local church as the manifestation in Corinth or Rome of the Body of

Christ, the Report says that "among Baptists it has been customary for the word 'church' in regard to ordination to be interpreted as meaning the local church in which a man is to exercise his ministry. We accept this interpretation, but it is our conviction that the New Testament teaching, as well as much Baptist practice in previous centuries, would suggest the view that the local church is not an isolated unit, but shares in a fellowship in which the churches are members one of another and that therefore the local church must act in the closest fellowship with all the churches of its denomination through their representatives. Hence it seems to us proper that at the Service of Ordination there should be represented the Baptist Union, the Association, the college, and representatives of neighbouring Baptist churches." (Report, p.21.) This is a surprisingly timid endorsement of what is in fact the usual practice: no doubt so expressed with an eye on the few who do not yet follow it, if such there be.

The Report recognises that in the present divided state of the Church each denomination has had to develop its own practice of ordination, and declares that it is desirable that representatives of other denominations should participate in all ordinations "as a witness to the inherent unity of the Body of Christ."

HUGH MARTIN.

The Apostolic Ministry and Priesthood

—Contd. from page 12

and they did not all expect to be ordained priest after a year in the diaconate.

We cannot here trace the historical developments whereby the presbyter became the normal priest and pastor of the local congregation and the diaconate became simply a preparation for the presbyterate, as a result of the political and social changes that caused the bishops to withdraw from the local pastorate and to become the administrative heads of large districts. Enough to say that the changes were the direct result of the growth of the Church and of its recognition by the Roman Empire. They did not affect the essence of the threefold ministry. The bishop still retained his specific functions of ordination and confirmation. The presbyter was still the pastoral and liturgical collaborator of the bishop. The deacon still remained the assistant of the other ministers.

A CONGREGATIONAL VIEW OF THE MINISTRY

In November 1955 Professor C. F. D. Moule of Cambridge published an article in *Theology* about the word *diakonein* (to serve, to minister), in which he showed that this word is used in the New Testament of the whole Church: if some persons were distinguished as deacons (*diakonoi*), it was only because they were rendering in some representative form the service which is the vocation of every church member. This seems to be very much in keeping with what is said elsewhere in the New Testament about the body of Christ (I Cor. xii) and the priesthood of the whole Church (I Peter ii 9). Ministry or ministering, therefore, is a function and responsibility of the church, through which it continues the ministry of Jesus Christ; and if some members of the Church are separated to a particular form of ministry it is that they may act in this representative capacity: they act on behalf of the Church, having been recognized as possessing the appropriate vocation and having been given the necessary authority.

Thus far, it may be supposed, most Christians would be agreed: it is commonly said by members of various communions that "we believe in the priesthood of all believers"; and the difference in thought and practice between, let us say, Anglicans and Congregationalists at this point really turns on the way in which the minister represents and exemplifies this priesthood which belongs in the mystery of God's grace to the whole body of the faithful. This is really the question of the way in which the minister is thought to be related to the *laos* (the people) of God: is he one who, for the fulfilling of his calling is ordained into a special "ordo" within the Church, or is he one of the church members who has the particular vocation of "the ministry" and acts as the others' representative? In either case he may truly be said to be rendering in some representative capacity the service or ministry which is the vocation of every church member; but in each case the way in which he is thought to be representative of the whole church is different.

For a Congregationalist the second of these two alternatives is the better. His whole training and his experience of life in the church leads him to lay great emphasis on the people of God as the basic fact from which all his thinking about specialized functions and ministries must begin. He will emphasize that those who are called and appointed to act for the people of God are noting what is the responsibility of the whole Church. He will think of the Minister of his local Church as *primus inter pares* a church member, one who has been called by God "to this very thing", whose calling has been recognized,

whose gifts have been stirred up and trained, whose vocation was finally sealed in ordination, when the Church set him apart to the ministry because God had already done so.

This way of speaking about ordination often seems out of focus to those more accustomed to hierarchical ways. They ask the question, What do you suppose is given to a minister at ordination? We believe that he is given all needful grace for his ministry; but we never use the phrase "the grace of ordination", because that seems to us to have come to imply what we believe to be mistaken. We do not believe that a man is given the gifts of the Holy Spirit because he has been ordained or consecrated to a particular office within the Church, for it seems to us more in keeping with the teaching of the New Testament to suppose that he ought to be ordained because he is already possessed of the gifts necessary for the particular work to which he is set apart. We have no doubt that we are nearer the thought and practice of the Primitive Church in this than those who take the opposite view; and this reflects a real division about the nature of ordination. With us recognition of the Spirit's gift in a man is not only an indispensable prerequisite of ordination, it is also an element in ordination itself. We ordain one already recognized as set apart; we commission him because God has already done so; and, while we firmly believe that he will be given all needful grace for the proper performance of his calling, we believe equally firmly that the gifts essential to his ministry have been given him before his ordination in the Church.

With us a minister is ordained in the particular church to which he has been called, save in the case of those who are to be missionaries; and it is that local church together with representatives of sister churches which ordains him. This is a corollary of our belief that what John Owen called "church power" is centred not in an officer of the Church, but in the Church itself. If, as we believe, Christ is present by his Spirit in the midst of his believing people to guide them to see and to do his will, it seems right to believe that the power of ordination is also committed to his people. Yet a particular church never acts in the matter of ordination as if it lived in isolation. It respects the ministerial standards, academic and other, which Congregationalists accept; it makes quite sure that it is ordaining one whom other similar church will recognize as a minister of the Word and Sacraments in the Church of God, and this is symbolized by the presence of duly appointed ministers to act with the Church.

But from whom does the minister derive his authority? The fact that a Congregational minister is ordained by the church which calls him to his first pastorate has led some of other

communions to suppose that this means that he is expected to preach only such doctrines as are acceptable to his people. That might be the case were he regarded as their servant; but, on the contrary, he is thought of as Christ's servant to them, and, as such, he is recognized as deriving his authority from Christ. In calling him, the people believed themselves to recognize in him one "appointed by the Lord"; before they called him they had prayed that they might be led to such recognition; and his business is not to labour as men-pleaser, but as a servant of the Lord. He will understand that, if he derives such authority as he has from the Lord, he must exercise it in the same way as his Master, "not lording it over the flock"; and he will regard as his most royal title "the servant of the servants of God".

Such an understanding and practice of ordination is condemned by many because it lacks that link with the historic Church which is held to be secured by episcopal ordination; and it may well be that there is something here which Congregationalists should seek to learn. Yet the doctrine of Apostolic Succession often seems to them the wrong answer to the right question. It is entirely right that Christians should have good reason for asserting that the Church in the present century is in all essential respects identical with that of apostolic times; but there is more than one way in which this identity can be recognized and secured. If it is thought that the Apostles were empowered to appoint their successors, so that the proper continuity of the Church could be secured, a particular view of the nature of church order logically follows; but if it be believed that the real successor of the Apostles was not the episcopate but the New Testament, that Christ orders his Church by being present in it through the Word made vivid and contemporary by the Spirit, then a quite different view of what church order should be is inevitable. It should not be thought that Congregationalists do not believe in apostolic succession; they have their own quite clear understanding of it, which is radically different from the hierarchical understanding of it; and ultimately this difference runs back to a division on the doctrine of grace; and it is here rather than in the nature of the ministry that the real crux of all reunion discussions is to be found.

What else needs to be said in this short article about the ministry as Congregationalists understand it may best be expressed by enumerating the principal functions which he is expected to perform: it sometimes occurs to a Congregationalist reader of, say, the Ignatian Epistles that what the bishop is described as doing corresponds a good deal more exactly to what his minister does Sunday by Sunday than the multifarious duties of the modern diocesan!

The Minister is responsible for the conduct of the church's

worship, not in the sense that no one may share it with him, but in the sense that he has been ordained "to this very thing"; and since this worship is the priestly duty of the people of God, it is quite idle to deny that the minister performs priestly functions in the name of the people of God. This priestly act is differently understood among Congregationalists and Anglicans; the point, however, is that no Congregationalist would deny the priestly element in worship.

It is not really proper to distinguish preaching from the conduct of worship, since Congregationalists understand the sermon to be an integral part of worship; indeed, they understand it in an almost sacramental way. What has been described as the Monstrance of the Word corresponds in our worship to the elevation of the Host in the Mass: the purpose of preaching is to set forth Christ in the midst of his people. Indeed, our whole conception of worship rests upon a profound belief in the Real Presence, though, once again, our interpretation of this presence is different in important respects from that held by the Church of Rome. Since preaching is thus understood, it ranks high among the duties a minister undertakes at ordination: he is to be a prophet and a teacher to his people.

The word "pastor" is often used as a ministerial title among us; and, properly understood, it includes every ministerial function: the pastor is to see that his flock are truly nourished by the Word; he is to provide for them wise leadership; he is to comfort and admonish them according to their need; and he is to train and lead them in due and acceptable worship. Indeed, we should hold that, unless he understands what might be called his liturgical, prophetic and administrative responsibilities pastorally, it is almost certain that he will not discharge them properly.

It will have become evident that a Congregationalist understanding of the ministry is different from the hierarchical one at several very important points; but it may be hoped that it has become equally clear that the Congregationalist's concern in his thought about the ministry is for the same sort of issues as are the chief preoccupation of those from whom he differs. Apostolicity, authority, fulness of Church life in worship and fellowship—these are inevitably among the chief issues when any Christian thinks about the ministry in the Church. Are our differing approaches to these questions necessarily mutually exclusive? If so, we may as well give up all talk about reunion, for all discussion about the way in which we may learn how better to express our unity in Christ must proceed on the assumption that this unity is real despite our separations and that in our separated condition we have each been given to learn what ought to be for our mutual enrichment.

JOHN HUXTABLE.

OLD CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS IN SWITZERLAND

A Report submitted to the International League of
Apostolic Faith and Order

The Old Catholics are the only non-Roman body in Switzerland who are Catholic, apart from some communities of Anglican and Orthodox foreigners. With these we have, of course, a friendly contact, although it would be desirable that this contact should be much closer. There is little to report about these relations nor about those with Roman Catholics.

There are not many catholic minded reformed people in Switzerland, such as there are, are mainly not in the German speaking part of the country. An exception is the community of the sisters of Grandchamp with their second house at Gelterkinden. The latter which is in the area of one of my three parishes near Basle. Then there is St Michael's Brotherhood (Berneuchener), to which a very few ministers belong. With these few people we have some relations, but things are still in the beginnings and the contacts need to increase.

So we have to deal in Switzerland mainly with non-catholic-minded Protestants. It is mainly the liberals and the Barthians which have great influence in church life. We have many occasions for contact. The Swiss population is very mixed, and generally our relations are very good ones. In several places, mainly in the towns, there are from time to time ecumenical discussions and services (of course not sacramental ones), which are very often called into being by our church. Therefore we have got many occasions to give testimony of our faith and our point of view regarding the reunion of the Church. This has been done very often.

Nevertheless it seems to me, and not only to me, that we ought to have done much more than we have. I will avow this quite honestly.

During a long time Old Catholics testified mainly the difference in between us and the Roman Catholic Church. But there was very little discussion and thinking about the distinctions "vis-a-vis" the Protestants. Of course all of us know that there are differences, but many people did not know that they are really essential and did not like to talk about them. I think, with this attitude we did not render a good service to our Reformed Christian brethren.

I suppose, the reasons for this were firstly the liberal influence of the 19th century within our church and secondly some theo-

logical influence from reformed Barthian theology. So we had the strange situation that some of our priests could not themselves see really important differences between us and the Protestants. What wonder, if they did not see any essential differences either? They believe generally that the differences concerning Mass and so on are only outward and unimportant. They see only the "No" against Rome and are glad about it. And even those who have much sympathy with us, and there are many, have very often no idea what we are in fact and that really old catholic life and thinking, teaching and feeling is from its roots another one than theirs. Many of them are very surprised to hear that there exists quite another kind of Catholic faith than the Roman one, a faith, which is not only not Roman, but positively Catholic. I can say from my own experience that many Protestants in Switzerland are very interested in our church, not at least for the reason, that many of them feel some defect within their own church life. It is, however, very difficult for them to understand us, because they are use to quite another way of thinking .

But things are changing. Today there is much more reflection about the real Old Catholic faith, and there is also a clearer testimony. Faith — and even true teaching — without love is not Catholic.

But we have also to think more about, and teach more on, these matters in our own church. We cannot rest upon the Catholic Faith without living it ourselves. Many of our own people do not know clearly enough what is the real Catholic Faith and the Catholic basis of reunion. The sense of these things and also the intensity of Church life is slowly growing today. To take one example: for some years we have been holding retreats. Most of them we hold in the Gelterkinden house of the sisters of Grandchamp, because we have not yet got any really convenient house for retreats of our own.

I think a good thing would be to get more Catholic literature from other countries like England.

One last thing I would like to mention. In trying to bring reformed brethren to an understanding of our position, we cannot begin with the Apostolic Succession, nor with any single sacrament. We have got to try to show them something of the fundamental attitude of sacramental life as a whole, the Church as the great sacrament and as the mystical body of Christ.

Reformed people are extremely suspicious of any outward forms. At first we have to understand them from their own position and to see their values and then to show them the spiritual contents of outward things, the deep connection between body and spirit, symbol and spirit; mainly we have to show them

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the central position of liturgical life. And all this as founded in Holy Scriptures. A strong spiritualism and individualism and also a typical Swiss independent democratic will in everything, also in religious life, are rather great barriers for these aims.

G. KONRAD,
Kaiseraugust, Switzerland.

THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH

The place of the laity in the Church, particularly in regard to government and the definition of doctrine, is a matter for debate not only in ecumenical circles but also within the domestic setting of the Church of England, for the recent report on *The Convocations and the Laity* is likely to produce vigorous debate. The April number of the *ECUMENICAL REVIEW* was devoted to this subject, and contained a particularly interesting article by Professor N. Afanasieff, of the Orthodox Institute of St. Sergius in Paris. Professor Afanasieff stated that "the priesthood belongs to God's people as a whole, and every member plays an active part in the liturgy as co-minister with his bishop." He then went on to discuss the question whether the laity were also co-ministers in the spheres of Church government and teaching, and pointed out that these were both functions which, as ministries within the Church for which special gifts are indispensable. If they were special gifts, bestowed by the Holy Spirit, they could not be possessed by the people as a whole. The Church is not a democracy, and the election of lay representatives could not endow them with the ministry of government. "The activity of God's people has nothing to do either with universal suffrage or with representative government, for it depends on grace."

"If it is indispensable to create a Council for the government of the Church in addition to the bishop," wrote Professor Afanasieff, "why not revive the ancient ministry of the presbyters, who would be elected by the Church and established for the ministry of government, as the members of the *Presbyterium* were in early times? It would be interesting to follow up this suggestion and relate it to the proposal made in the report on *Relations between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches* regarding the establishment of elders in the Church of England.

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